

When it was politely suggested to him that^c he
had evolved
the plan of Nationalisation out of his head,⁵⁵ he
replied that
he had seen—

"a very great substitution of public administration
for private
enterprise going on in the world for the last
generation probably
greater than most people are aware "

The point which it seemed hardest to get the
minds of his
opponents to seize was that—

"The object of a nationalised industry is not to
make, or lose
money The object of a nationalised coal industry
is to supply
coal, and supply it as required in the best
possible way, and at
as little cost as possible "

He refuted the notion that the servants of a
public authority
would control it, illicitly

"My opinion is—I am speaking from experience in
this matter—
that when the persons employed by a Public
Authority have
public opinion upon their side, by which I mean
public opinion
very largely of their own class, and the Public
Authority gives
way, there is no harm, but directly a person
employed by a
Public Authority goes beyond the point at which
they have
public opinion on their side—the public opinion of
their own
class—then the Government, or the Public
Authority, is very
strong, even stronger than a private capitalist
is, or might
be"

Mr Evan Williams, the leader of the owners,
put it to him
that he would not find anyone on the owners'
side who had
"any idea that Nationalisation would be an
improvement
in the management of the industry " "I am
sorry,⁹⁵ came
the reply, in bland and courteous tones,

"to say that I did not find many of them who had
any ideas at
all, they were practical men "

"Without ideas?"

"Yes I should attach very great value to
the opinion
of practical men upon the subject, if I could get
it, but they are
so seldom willing to form an opinion "